There was a drop in generation in 1989-90 compared to the previous year because of failure of generator transformer in the 2nd unit of Tarapur Atomic Power Station and the moderator inlet manifold in the two units of Madras. The generation in 1991-92 was less compared to 1990-91 because of restricted operational power in the two units of Madras, generator transformer failure in the first unit of Madras and safety related modifications and maintenance works in NAPS-I and other units.

Generation in the current year is low because of the fire incident in Narora Atomic Power Station in March, 1993 and the consequent series of inservice inspection in the turbines of Madras Atomic Power Station (MAPS), Narora Atomic Power Station (NAPS-2) and Kakrapar Atomic Power Station (KAPS) apart from rehabilitation work in the first unit of Narora.

(c) To improve generation effective in-service inspection and preventive maintenance of plants in operation have been taken up by the Nuclear Power Corporation of India Ltd. (NPCIL). The installed capacity of nuclear power generation is also being raised to 2820 MWe with the commissioning of 5 units of 220 MWe each which are under active implementation.

Proper maintenance of Atomic Power Plants

1265. SHRI VIREN J. SHAH : Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state :

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn to a Prime Time television report published in the Pioneer of February 15, 1994 under the caption "India's N-Plan a dangerous failure";

(b) if so, what are the facts in this regard;

(c) to what extent India's nuclear programmes could cause serious health problems;

(d) the number of nuclear mishaps and breakdowns which took place in 1993 and so far in 1994 and what are the details in this regard;

(e) what are the reasons therefor; and

(f) what are the details of steps Government have so far taken for proper functioning and maintenance of our Atomic Power Plants ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE PRIME MINISTER'S OFFICE (SHRI) BHUVNESH CHATURVEDI) : (a) and (b) The Columbia Broadcasting Service (CBS) of the United States telecast a programme on 13th February 1994 "Sixty Minutes", a segment of which was on our nuclear programme. Quoting this telecast, reports have appeared in various Indian newspapers highlighting the alleged serious deficiencies in the Indian nuclear power programme.

(c) Radioactive releases from Nuclear Power Plants do not cause any appreciable increase in the radiation levels over and above what is existing in nature. These releases are well within the permissible limits. The Nuclear Power Plants do not pose any radiation hazard to the people and environment.

(d) and (e) There has been no accidents (mishaps) in our nuclear power plants so far. In 1993, there were 49 outages (of duration more than 24 hours in the nine nuclear power plants in operation, i.e. about 5 outages per unit. In 1994 till end of January, the total number of outages have been 13 in nine nuclear power plants in operation, i.e. about 1 outage per unit on an average. These outages have been mainly due to equipment problem in the conventional side and are similar to such shutdowns in any power station or engineering industry.

(f) Adequate provision exists for safe and reliable operation of all nuclear power plants, through 'Technical Specifications' and 'Procedures' approved by Atomic Energy Regulatory Board (AERB) and professional organisational set up of each power stations. A series of in-service inspections of turbines have been carried out and modifications to blades have been implemented/in progress in the operating units consequent on the Narora fire incident. The nine atomic power plants in commercial operation in the country have been functioning by and large satisfactorily and contributing to generation of electric power. Preventive and protective maintenance procedures are being further tightened to improve the generation level of the operating plants. The country is committed to development of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes and commendable progress has been achieved by the Indian scientists and technologists.